

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 397

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TAGS: PFOR, IZ

SUBJECT: US-IRAQI RELATIONS

REF: BAGHDAD 338, STATE 121823

1. SUMMARY: FOREIGN OFFICE DISCUSSIONS INDICATE IRAQ CONTINUES BE INTERESTED IN NORMALIZATION RELATIONS WITH U.S. BUT AT GRADUAL PACE. ARAB-ISRAEL PROBLEM AND U.S. "ACQUIESCENCE" TO IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR KURDS REMAIN CHIEF OBSTACLES TO RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS. RESUMPTION OF US-ALGERIAN RELATIONS WILL HAVE FAVORABLE EFFECT ON U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS. APPOINTMENT OF DR. TAQA AS NEW FOREIGN MINISTER MAY ALSO BE A PLUS.

2. I HAVE HAD TWO CONVERSATIONS WITH MISS BAQR REGARDING U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS SINCE RECEIPT STATE REFTEL. ON JUNE 22 I CONVEYED SUBSTANCE PARA 3 STATE REFTEL AND MISS BAQR TOOK CAREFUL NOTES, SAYING THAT SHE WOULD PASS ON U.S. POSITION TO DR. TAQA WHO WAS THEN UNDERSECRETARY IN FOREIGN MINISTRY. IN SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION ABOUT ARAB-ISRAEL PROBLEM DURING FIRST MEETING WITH MISS BAQR, I REMARKED THAT WHATEVER IRAQ THOUGHT ABOUT SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT, THERE HAD BEEN A DIVIDENT FOR IRAQ -I.E. THE RELEASE AND SAFE RETURN TO IRAQ OF TEN IRAQI POWS HELD BY ISRAEL (THESE MEN HAVE BEEN GIVEN RED CARPET TREETMENT INCLUDING BEING RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT BAQR WITH ATTENDANT EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY).

3. MISS BAQR ASKED IF U.S.-ALGERIAN RELATIONS HAD BEEN
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RESTORED. I SAID I HAD NO OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION BUT HAD SEEN

PRESS STATEMENTS TO THAT EFFECT. MISS BAQR SAID IRAQI LEADERSHIP HAD GREAT RESPECT FOR AND CONFIDENCE IN JUDGMENT OF BOUMEDIEN. ALGERIAN ACTION WOULD TEND TO INFLUENCE IRAQIS IN DIRECTION OF RESUMING RELATIONS.

4. MISS BAQR THEN REVERTED TO KURDISH ISSUE SAYING IRAQ STILL BELIEVES U.S. COULD PREVENT IRAN FROM AIDING KURDISH REBELS IF IT WISHED. I OBSERVED THAT U.S. ABILITY TO INFLUENCE THE SHAH WAS LIMITED TO SAY THE LEAST. WHEN SHE EXPRESSED POLITE DISBELIEF, I SAID SHAH ACTED INDEPENDENTLY IN HIS OWN PERCEIVED INTERESTS, CITING IRANIAN SEIZURE TUNBS AND ABU MUSA IN FACE OF U.S. ADVICE TO CONTRARY. JISS BAQR SAID THAT U.S. NONETHELESS WAS "ACQUIESCING" IN IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR THE KURDS. SHE ADDED HOWEVER THAT GOI STILL GRATIFIED AT USG REFUSAL TO DEAL WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF KURDISH REBELS IN U.S.

5. MISS BAQR THEN INFORMED ME SHE IS SHORTLY LEAVING FOR ASSIGNMENT TO IRAQI EMBASSY IN ROME.

6. ON JUNE 23 DR. TAQA'S APPOINTMENT AS FOREIGN MINISTER WAS ANNOUNCED. I CALLED ON MISS BAQR ON JUNE 24. SHE REPORTED THAT TAQA HAD APPRECIATED RECEIVING CLEAR STATEMENT U.S. POSITION, BUT HAD INDICATED THAT PATIENCE WOULD BE REQUIRED BEFORE OBSTACLES COULD BE OVERCOME. MISS BAQR SAID TAQA WANTED U.S. TO KNOW THAT IRAQIS HAVE FAITH IN SINCERITY AND GOOD WILL OF PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY KISSINGER. MISS BAQR MADE PERSONAL OBSERVATION THAT TAQA'S APPOINTMENT WAS GOOD OMEN FOR FUTURE U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS.

7. SHE THEN SAID TAQA WANTED TO ESTABLISH NEW CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION FOR ME AND ARTHUR LOWRIE ON MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE. WE ARE INSTRUCTED TO DEAL WITH MUNIM AL-ZUBAIDI IN FOREIGN MINISTRY. AL-ZUBAIDI WILL BE BRIEFED ON OUTSTANDING ISSUES OR OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST BETWEEN U.S. AND IRAQ AND WILL BE AUTHORIZED SPEAK ON TAQA'S BEHALF. GATCH

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